



Snip First For Cats

Project #
20-535

County:

Number of Cats Spayed:	49	Number of Dogs Spayed:	0
Number of Cats Neutered:	50	Number of Dogs Neutered:	0

Amount Received: 5,320	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0
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Project Synopsis:

The goal of this project was to spay and neuter owned cats in the community specifically targeting the farming community and the Grasonville area.



Project Description:

Saving Future Feal Cats a Non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the overpopulation, suffering and abandonment of pets/cats. SFFC was established in May 2017. SFFC is completely run with volunteers which do everything from transport, care for after spay neuter, educating the public about spaying and neutering, to feeding and monitoring community cats.

The purpose of the project was to offer free spay and neuter to low income families and to educate the public of the value of spaying and neutering. The goal went hand in hand with our mission, to reduce the overpopulation and abandonment of the cats especially pregnant cats in Queen Annes County. these owned indoor and outdoor cats which were not altered have been contributing to the growing community cat problem in Queen Anne County. This project was aimed at reducing the number of homeless and unwanted cats which are turned into the county shelter.

The project was aimed to spay and neuter 76 cats. The Grant Funded the actual cost of the spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations including the rabies vaccination. SFFC covered the cost of flea treatment, microchip and any other medical expense. SFFC also offered to take in any family of cats, to go to fosters for rehoming if the owners agreed to and could not continue caring for the cats.

Summary of Approach:

Period of program ran from October 2019 to May 30, 2020

SFFC already had a waiting list of individuals and areas needing help. SFFC Volunteers contacted individuals and set up schedules for spay/neuter and needs for each individual.SFFC announced the program on social



media. Because of our prior contacts and accomplishments we have been received approximately 10-20 calls, emails, texts a day from various areas asking for help. SFFC volunteers would assess the situation, get applications for approval and schedule each client. SFFC Volunteers offered Transport to those that could not transport and offered to hold during healing, since many could not transport or were not in situations to hold during after care..

SFFC worked with Spay Now our low cost veterinary clinic to schedule the cats for surgeries, several times the surgeries had to be scheduled through Mid Atlantic Cat Hospital either due to booked schedules or difficult medical issues. SFFC covered the costs, through fundraising, the medical issues that arose during this project. Each cat that was funded through the project received the county required rabies vaccination and a microchip.

Owners that had a cat that unexpectedly had kittens, SFFC volunteers worked with the family to care for the queen and kittens or to place in foster care and then return the mom and kittens or adopt the kittens to approved homes once they were weaned, spayed/neutered, vaccinated with grant funds.

The second portion of the project is education: Many of the calls SFFC receives is from cat owners experiencing unwanted behaviors or from the community that do not know how to address neighbors' cats behaviors or a cat's wellbeing. Volunteers, that have been trained to address these behaviors, which may be from unaltered cats, medical issues or other external factors, would set up appointments with individuals to address these concerns to help alleviate the problems they face, so that cats do not unnecessarily end up in the shelter. SFFC's caring and compassion for cats and their knowledge in the overwhelming burden of unwanted cat populations in shelters is their basis for conversations with owners. These conversations also resulted in participants in the program.

SFFC set up a community cat training class at the local county shelter to help educate about how unaltered cats contribute to the overpopulation of the cats in the county and what our community can do to help alleviate this issue.

Accomplishments:

Snip First For Cats through SFFC has accomplished its goals with this project. SFFC Spayed 49 cats and neutered 50 cats. Many of these cats already had several kittens in the past which either were put outside unaltered or given away to other families unaltered. Several of the cats already were pregnant again or already had kittens which ended up in foster homes. Through this program we were able to stop the cycle of the reproductions of many more unwanted cats/kittens.

Through this program we have been able to reach out to the community and educate about unaltered cats. We are now seeing, through social media where the community is tagging or asking individuals to reach out to us for help with unwanted cats, pregnant cats, families of cats and instructing individuals about not adopting/giving away unaltered kittens. We see that in the future this will result in lower county shelter intakes and euthanasia rate.

Lessons Learned:

Being a new organization and still learning ways to identify the low income or those that really are in need, was a challenge. It was difficult to get individuals to trust us and to understand that we truly were there to help not to screen them or hold them accountable.

Second challenge we found was that many of the owned cats were not planned owned cats, these were cats that just showed up, dumped on their farm, or because they lived in a community where this was common place to leave your cat behind when moving. Because of the individuals kind caring hearts they ended up with a cat or several that they really could not afford, they claimed them as their cats, but then because expenses did not want to claim the cat as their cat, even though the cat came into their homes. Because of the individuals financial situations, we encountered many more extra expenses. We also encountered many more cats that



already had families/kittens. For some reason we encountered many male cats that were cryptochid wich cost us more. We learned that more funds will need to be reaised or set aside for these unforeseen medical expenses.

We also learned that once the word got out that SFFC was helping with the spaying/neutering we received more calls then we could handle and did not have enough Spay Now Clinic appointments set up, it became a challenge to get appointments.

In the second quarter we ran into Covid-19 challenges which made it difficult to follow up on the schedule we had set for spay neuters due to the clinic being shut down. We ran into the challenge of many of the female cats already pregnant, were able to get some into usrgery before too late, but some not so lucky.

Due to the shutdown our commuity outreach event at the schools and at several of the pet stores were canceled.

Due to the Covid-19 we began to be challanged by requests for surrenders, for many various reasons, some being financial. We ran into several challenges of individuals that wanted their cats altered butthen did not want them back.

One of our biggest challenges near the end of our fund use was a grain farm that called us for help with their cats, many years of not altering the cats. Now that husband had a stroke, the wife wanted to get help with altering the cats that have been multiplying over the years and they can no longer afford to feed. We had to convince them to allow us to spay neuter, return some, but adopt out others so they will be cared for properly. This was a real challenge because for so many years they had these cats and their decendants, they did not want to give this up. This was a big challenge to convince an older couple why this needed to happen. This is still an ongoing project.

Attachments:

Spayneuterssummary.pdf

For More Information Contact:

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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM**

